



Building People Power for Climate & Energy Justice

July 12, 2017

The Honorable Roy Cooper
North Carolina Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

VIA EMAIL

Subject: Urging you to veto HB 589, which stifles renewable energy and jobs

Dear Governor Cooper:

NC WARN strongly urges you to veto HB 589 due to its detrimental impacts on North Carolina's once-growing clean energy sector and overall economy. Not only would the bill drive away large, job- and revenue-producing wind energy projects, it would do the same for rooftop solar across the state – both under false pretenses.

The [*New York Times*](#) just ran a story on the four-year, national effort by electric utilities and the Koch brothers to kill rooftop solar in most states of this nation. Sadly, their efforts are succeeding. Those fossil fuel corporations – including Duke Energy – and their front groups have been active in North Carolina for several years, most recently involving HB 589.

The national anti-clean energy strategy is quite obvious with the deceptive HB 589. The attack on wind in North Carolina is led by Sen. Harry Brown, a recipient of Koch Industries' money (as shown by his NC Board of Election reports), who strangely persists with his claim that he must protect military activities from wind farms even though the military insists wind projects are not a threat.

Similarly, the solar provisions are not what proponents claim. Duke Energy and legislative leaders rolled HB 589 out in the House as a "consensus bill" after it was negotiated behind closed doors (environmental groups were shut out following months of stakeholder meetings) then fast-tracked for approval without public input. While *possibly* providing a short-term, limited boost to a few utility-scale solar producers, this bill would further damage North Carolina's rooftop solar industry and protect Duke's monopoly against the competition that threatens its business model of building power plants and raising rates.

The key selling point, "HB 589 will open up rooftop solar leasing," is deceptive and hollow, but the bill's backroom proponents have used it successfully to mask the damage to the

rooftop solar industry. Unlimited solar leasing is already allowed under state law; HB 589 would actually put a cap on it. Moreover, leasing has not proven to be an effective model for solar companies or customers in this state.

A similar practice that *does* work for many of the rooftop installers and the customers they serve is third-party sales, which would be killed by HB 589. Duke Energy has lobbied vigorously against third-party sales over the past two years because it would open up competition.

Worst of all, the bill would allow Duke Energy to attack rooftop solar by adding more fees on customers and lowering net metering payments. Despite the corporate propaganda against net metering, every new solar panel benefits all customers by offsetting the persistent Duke argument that it must keep building more fracked gas-fired power plants.

Perhaps you can appeal to lawmakers of both parties to agree that North Carolinians deserve democratic state policy-making, not backroom deals followed by deceptive publicity driven by fossil fuel corporations seeking to enhance profits at the expense of public health, the climate and our state's economy.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Warren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Warren
Executive Director